

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for the delivery of streamed data content from a server to a client device over a communications network, the method comprising:
 - requesting a streamed data content from a listing server;
 - delivering to a client device an initial streamed data content file from one or more hosting servers having a plurality of streamed data content files stored therein;
 - displaying the initial streamed data content to the client device;
 - implementing a user interface program, wherein the program has a user interface displayed on the client device and wherein the program allows a user of the client device to adjust the quality level of the streamed content being displayed.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising delivering the user interface program to the client device.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - re-requesting from the listing server or hosting server a second streamed data content file having a different quality level from said initial streamed content file, wherein said re-requesting includes an initiation time pointer corresponding to a position within the initial streamed data file being displayed at the time of said re-requesting;
 - delivering said second data content file to the client device from a position relative to the initiation time pointer.

 The method of claim 3, wherein the position is less than about 10 seconds from the initial time pointer.

4. The method of claim 4, wherein the position is less than about 5 seconds from the initial time pointer.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the position is less than about 1 second from the initial time pointer.

6. The method of claim 3, wherein said program is substantially platform independent.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said program is implemented in Java or Javascript.

8. The method of claim 3, wherein the initial streamed data content file is a video file.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the different quality level is a different image size.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the different quality level is a different data transfer rate.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining an available network protocol on the client device.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein said protocol determining is accomplished by the user interface program implemented on the client device.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the protocol to be determined is selected from the group consisting of UDP, RTP, RTSP and RSVP.

14. The method of claim 1, further comprising determining a connection speed of the client device to the listing server or to the hosting or hosting servers prior to delivering the initial streamed content.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the connection speed is determined by reading a user-defined value for a client device.

16. The method of claim 14, wherein the value is determined using a connection speed determining program implemented on the client device.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the connection speed determining program is the user interface program.

18. The method of claim 14, further comprising selecting the initial streamed data content to have a quality level appropriate for the determined connection speed.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the initial streamed data content is delivered as a slide show when the connection speed is between about 8 kilobits per second and about 20 kilobits per second.

20. The method of claim 18, wherein the initial streamed data content is delivered as a video when the connection speed is greater than about 20 kilobits per second.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of content files are stored on the hosting server as a single file and converted to the appropriate quality level in response to said requesting.

22. A method for the delivery of streamed data content from a server to a client device over a communications network, the method comprising:

requesting a streamed data content from a listing server;

determining a connection speed of the client device to a hosting server;

determining an available network protocol on a client device;

delivering to the client device an initial streamed data content file from one or more hosting servers having a plurality of streamed data content files stored therein;

displaying the initial streamed data content to the client device;

implementing a user interface program on the client device, wherein the program allows a user of the client device to adjust the quality level of the streamed content being displayed.

23. A system for controlling the display of streamed data content, the system comprising:

a client device;

a hosting server or servers, having a plurality of data content files stored therein;

a user interface program, wherein the program allows a user of the client device to adjust the quality level of the streamed content being displayed, the user interface program comprising:

a data content display region;

a quality level interface, wherein a user action at the quality level interface results in the display of the video content without the necessity of restarting streaming of the content from the beginning of the content file.

24. The system of claim 23, wherein the user interface is a graphical user interface program displayed on a video display device.

25. The system of claim 24, wherein quality level interface comprises one or more means for interacting.